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HE FIRESIDE

JOHN D. LONG

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AT THE FIRESIDE

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John D. Long

BOSTON
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1914

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TO HELEN

SOME of these verses have for several years been floating about in the newspapers, and now with others — all written a good while ago — they are printed together in this book for the sake of old times, and I dedicate them to you who were so filially in sympathy with me in the receding memories and associations they recall.

CONTENTS

At the Fireside	9
Margaret	10
Helen	12
Curlylocks	13
Thanksgiving	14
Per Astra ad Coelum	16
Asleep	17
On the Train	18
Crow Point	19
The Music Box	22
Nezinscot	23
The Old Songs	24
The Mountains of Maine	26
Wood Notes	28
The Dead Leaves	31
Apple Buds	34
School Days	36
The Beach	37
Sunset	39
Limitation	40
Jesus	41
Evening Hymn	42
Our Minister	43
Our Sexton	44

Ordination Hymn . . 46
The Pilgrim . . . 47
Centennial Hymn, 1876 . . 48
The Flag 49
The Soldiers' Home . . 51
The Capitol at Washington . 52
A Kindly Critic . . . 55

AT THE FIRESIDE

AT nightfall by the firelight's cheer
My little Margaret sits me near,
And begs me tell of things that were
When I was little, just like her.

Ah, little lips! you touch the spring
Of sweetest sad remembering,
And heart and hearth flash all aglow
With ruddy tints of long ago.

I at my father's fireside sit,
Youngest of all who circle it,
And beg him tell me what did he
When he was little, just like me.

MARGARET

I AM a little three-year old:
My eyes are heaven, my hair is gold.
What heaven and gold are, I don't know,
But what I mean is, Ma says so.

Waked by the birdies and the sun,
Till night I chatter and I run;
And am so happy all day through
I make all others happy, too.

They say my face is sweet and fair
Beneath the big brown hat I wear;
Sometimes I stick it with a trim
Of dandelions round the brim.

At night when tire my little feet,
I'm glad my bread and milk to eat;
In mama's lap my head I lay,
This is the prayer I always say: —

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
Father in heaven, take care of me:
May my sleep be sound and sweet
And my waking happy be."

In bed tucked safe from harm and cold,
Shadows and slumber round me fold:
Sometimes I dream that, one by one,
The brown mice o'er my pillow run.

HELEN

HELEN is aged two;
Look at the tender blue
Her eyes have tempted from the heavenliest patches in the skies!
Look at her rose-tint face,
The ineffable fine grace
That in its smiles and dimples everywhere upon it lies!

Had lady's hand e'er such
An inborn grace of touch?
Could nestling head more gently woo, forgiving or forgiven?
Did ever mouth put up,
Or bud, so fresh a cup?
Or little feet make doorway seem so like the gate of heaven?

Father enfold, I pray,
This little lamb alway:
My arm and love will such poor shelter be in storm or stress,
That oh! may thy great arm
Keep her dear feet from harm,
And thy great love enwrap her in its perfect happiness!

CURLYLOCKS

THE door bursts open and in he runs,
Dearest to us of God's little ones.

Mid the clover half-hid, he has gathered up
The dandelion and buttercup.

Their tribute of yellow gold-dust glows,
Like down upon fruit, on his chin and nose.

The embodied sunshine always lies
On his curly fair hair and bright brown eyes.

His face so swiftly mirrors his heart,
It sparkles with speech ere his lips are apart.

He gleams through the house from morn till
night,
A laughing, tiptoeing soul of light.

All beautiful colors, all bright spirits meet
In this Raphael's cherub on volatile feet.

THANKSGIVING

LAST night, dear Hilda, was Thanksgiving Eve,
Deluged and wild. The wind surged in great waves
That beat upon the house and wrapped it round
And made it tremble, yet awoke no fear;
For in their mighty hands there seemed a sense
Of safety, as, enfolded in the heart
Of a strong man, a woman nestles safe,
Sure that no harm can happen though the arm
That clasps might crush her in its playfulness —
A lion's strength, yet gentle to her love.
Over the beach and wharves the tide rushed up,
And swimming o'er the meadows made them lakes.
We on the shore felt all the toss and storm
And lingered by the lamplight and the fire.
The rain pelted the windows, cheating us
To come and look into the face of night,
So dark that not a feature answered back.
And yet the very tempest made me glad
To think that thou, far inland from the sea,

Hadst reached the shelter of thine own dear
hearth,
Safe-havened from all risk of care and toil,
Letting thy heart go free, once more at rest
And happy like a child again at home.
I knew God's love and peace were with thee
there
And breathed, unheard, my Benedicite.
Was it unheard? It may be One did hear,
And give his angels charge concerning thee,
So thou shalt dash thy foot against no stone.

Thanksgiving day. Still wild the storm.
The rain
Is snow, sweeping cross land and sea in
wraiths
Of mist, yet warmer, merrier makes in-
doors
New England's festival of hearth and home.
I sit beside my fire, but not alone;
For from the past come clustering in old
friends,
Kinsfolk and sainted ones who years ago
Sat at my father's board Thanksgiving day,
In the sweet village-time among the hills.
My heart is full of memories, and of thanks
For life's rich fruits, for friendships and
for faith
In human hearts, and sure for you, my
friend,
Dear spirit that hath healing in thy wings.

PER ASTRA AD COELUM

TIME was I loved the stars and skies
For their own sake — nor now less
fond —
Yet now far past their range my eyes
Go searching for the heaven beyond.

Time was I loved your soulful eyes
For their own sake — nor now repent,
So soft the lovelight in them lies,
Of every mood so eloquent.

Yet now like stars they long have been
Not more the light by which I trod
Than gateways where I enter in
To breathe the love and peace of God.

ASLEEP

THIS little baby child hath cried
Himself asleep at some light, childish pain;
And on his face its traces still abide
Like shapes of clouds o'er meadow flying, —
Upon his cheek a teardrop lying,
As on a leaf a single drop of rain.

See! as I bend above his face,
The shade of grief flies like the hurrying cloud,
And like a flood of sunshine in its place,
The shadow yielding to the splendor,
A smile so sunny breaks and tender,
His soul seems speaking through it half aloud.

Say, what is passing in his sleep?
What are the dreams across his vision driven?
Hath one, too young to sow, begun to reap?
Doth he, at one light grief repining,
The worthlessness of earth divining,
Already dream of better things in heaven?

ON THE TRAIN

IN the late fall, from out the window of the car,
I see the restful wings of night slow fall and fold, —
And naught distinct, as swift we shoot, except afar
The soft horizon-line of melting hill and wold.

Then faint at first, brighter at every throb, glow forth
The stars that pioneer the lighting of God's dome.
Ay! there ye are, ye dipper jewels of the north,
Who ever go before and stand above my home.

My babes have said their prayers, and nestle to their sleep;
My wife, soul-full for them and me, looks out on you:
Guard them, ye starry sentinels, while on I sweep;
Flash them the message of my tender love and true.

CROW POINT

HOW sweet the day! E'en as a miser wakes
At times under the touch of pity's hand
And gives profusely from his hoarded store,
His face as tender as a mother's smile
Ere yet his greed encase it o'er again,
So now the bleak November opes its heart
And pours o'er all the earth and sky the soft
And melting haze of August, and we walk
Through fields again, and sit upon the rocks.
Here to the dreams, in which this Sabbath day
The whole world seems to sleep, we also yield.
Into our raptured hearts we draw the deep
And blessed influence of the scene. Afar
The blue hills fade and veil their ragged tops
Beneath the light that softens them: the bare
Brown fields flush almost into beauty, as
The face of age does sometimes catch again
The beauty of its youth: the fir-trees fringe
The landscape with immortal hues of green.
Across the outspread meadow-lands appear
The furrows of the earth just ploughed, and fresh

With all the fragrance of the new-turned sod;
The sheep, that herded closer when we came,
Stand picturesquely grouped upon the ledge
And scan us with grave eyes: the cattle love
The sun, and saunter feeding here and there,
Unconscious that they grace the hillsides now
As when the Hebrew poet in his song
Sang of the cattle on a thousand hills.
Out of the hazy light, e'en as we gaze,
Grow on our eyes the Quincy spires far off:
The Weymouth village roofs break through the air,
And masts of ships at anchor, and, anon,
The outlines dim of nestling cottages.
Sweet church bells, softened by the distance, strike,
And children's voices come, we know not whence,
And from the turnpike bridge the thud of hoofs.
Eastward, incessant roars the rolling surf;
And, just below us, flocks of ducks alight
Upon the water, gabbling as they swim;
The islands in the harbor lie asleep,
Unwaked, so still the surface of the sea,
So slumberous the drowsy atmosphere.
A rift of inky cloud, its edge defined

As with a pencil, rests high up the sky
And finds its shadow in the wave below;
Elsewhere so faint the light's gradations that
The sky and sea upon the horizon meet,
And mingle into one. Low in the west
E'en as we look, the misty veil is rent,
And in a single opening silver-lined
The sun half lifts its heavy eyelid and,
All else still shrouded in the haze,
Its rays fall only on the fortress walls
And on the sails of schooners gliding past,
Illumining them with light so soft and rare,
So delicately fading on the deep
That artist's pencil ne'er can copy it,
Nor other than the canvas of the soul
Reflect its memory.
Let us walk on:
For now the setting sun's last cloud-tinge faints.
The village with its belfry and its elms,
Its wharfs and slopes and houses on the hill,
Seen from the rustic railing of the bridge
On which we linger as we pass, doth seem
Like some New England painter's work, who paints,
Pent up in town, his dear old village home.
Farewell! the night sinks down, the rain-drops fall,
And chill November shuts her heart again.

THE MUSIC BOX

IDLY a music box I wound,
And in the gloaming sat alone;
The shadows blended with the sound;
Memories came mellowing with the tone.

It played two tunes — one like the glad
Song-greeting of the birds at dawn:
One a pathetic minor, sad
As loving eyes of love forlorn.

Now loud, now low, it laughed and wept,
Then faltered down, slower yet and slower,
Until the lingering last bars left
Were the most plaintive of the score.

Slow, intermittent, faint the notes
Like single pearls of sweetness roll,
Till, with the last and sweetest, floats
Into the far-away my soul.

So in those shadowed years died she
Who was the melody of love,
Life ebbing slow and plaintively,
Like heart-drops from a bleeding dove;

Yet struck an ever sweeter note,
Almost too faint to hear at last,
Though backward now its echoes float
The clearest, sweetest of the past.

NEZINSCOT

RETURNED from years of rack and toil,
Escaped from fetter-locks of care,
Again I walk my native soil,
Again I breathe my native air.

The snow is on the circling hills;
The crisp smoke curls its morning tress;
My heart with old-time freedom fills,
I feel again its restfulness.

Beside bright hearths with clustering friends,
We live our memories back once more;
Too soon the winter evening ends; —
It can recall, but not restore.

THE OLD SONGS

THE songs we sang were few and plain:
We sang them o'er and o'er again.

'Twas long ago, yet now and then
We meet and sing them o'er again.

And when the last sweet chord has died,
We sit in silence side by side.

Our hearts are full to running o'er
With raindrops from the skies of yore;

And none dares speak, but, silent all,
We almost hear the shadows fall.

Then, while the twilight deepens fast,
As dim and somber as the past,

Like souls revisiting the spheres
Come back to us the buried years,

And in their light, but not as then,
We live their seasons o'er again,

Till closing round our downcast eyes
We feel the blinding tear-mists rise.

The olden songs, the simple lays,
Full of the breath of other days,

With dear associations rife,
Have come to be a part of life,

And though they touch the heart with pain
We sing them o'er and o'er again.

THE MOUNTAINS OF MAINE

I NE'ER shall forget when returning one day
To my home 'mid the mountains of Maine,
When the summer was nigh and the fair hand of May
Was bedecking the country again,
What a thrill of delight, inexpressibly sweet,
I felt while extending my gaze
O'er the scenes, unforgotten, where often my feet
Had rambled in earlier days.

What a welcoming look I imagined I found
In the old streakéd mountains in view,
In the quick-flowing streams, and meadows elm-crowned,
And the fields clothed in summer's bright hue.
How the full honest breeze I had tasted so oft,
With health and with vigor o'erladen,
Swept over my cheek with a touch that was soft
As the smooth, velvet hand of a maiden.

My soul swelled with joy, springing up to
the skies
With the view that was spread out before
it;
Then, deeper emotions beginning to rise,
A feeling of sadness came o'er it:
For I knew from these scenes of my boy-
hood around me,
The lakes, and the woods and the plain,
I must part and dissever the ties that had
bound me
So long to the mountains of Maine.

WOOD NOTES

O'ER broken ways, through rock and wood,
By brook, by steep, by solitude,
By farm-house lone the cliff below,
Into the forest depths we go.
The moss yields softly to our feet;
The birches o'er our pathway meet;
Their leaves the azure dot, and make
A floating, happy bridge of sighs.
Hid woodmates call and bird-notes break
In loud and sudden ringing cries,
Till half-way up the mountain side,
Gleams through the trees the sheeny tide,
As if some god with wand had smit
The mighty rock and drawn from it
The cool, sweet waters forth to make
The bridal of the wood and lake.
Around its rim, the forest shade
In darkened lines of light is laid.
Above and imaged in its breast,
O'erhangs the bald lone mountain crest.
Set like a gem, its face is seen,
Raising like lips its little steeps
To kiss the breath that o'er them sweeps;
Then not a wrinkle on its sheen,
Save when upleaps the springing trout,
Whence bubbling circles widen out,
Until exhausted in their reach,
They faint in silence on the beach.

'Twas here we came in sporting days;
Our roaring camp-fires, red with blaze,
Inflamed the night and light the tide
With fans of firelight flaring wide.
Here on the fallen trunks that sleep
Bent in the wave and half on shore, —
Here on the tonsured rocks that keep
The waters back that spray them o'er,
We lay at morn and lay at night
And threw with merciless delight
The gold-flecked swimmers to the skies;
Yet all to pity turned, instead,
So still they lay with filming eyes
And fading spots of blue and red,
Till gasping hard and fast for breath,
Tossing the nestling leaves, in vain
They struggled, in the throes of death,
The living waters to regain.

At night, weary of mountain ways,
We saw, above the hills afar
The gloom succeed the sunset's blaze,
Whence burst anon the evening star
To gem with gold the August night
And touch the wave with broken light.
The air from nooks and arches grim
The open tree-trunks wandered through;
We saw the mountain top grow dim,
Fading and dark, mid falling dew;
We saw the rich dark flashing light

The ripples threw beneath the night;
And still we heard, in pulses low,
Their ceaseless beatings ebb and flow;
We saw the clouds drive swiftly through
The starlit depths of faintest blue,
And heard the voices in the air
That rise at night in forest deep
And weird and pensive music bear
To lull the senses into sleep.

At morn we saw the sun uprise
And fire the forest green anew
With every tint of verdant dyes,
Striking the mountain-side with light,
While all below still grayer grew
And woods and waves wore twilight hue,
Thus crowning day upon the night.
And all this sweet transition hour
A thousand warblers waked and sung
And drenched the branches with a shower
Of tuneful trills that interrung.
The morn was brimmed with melody,
That overflowed in countless rills
Through ether purling to the sea
And rippling down aërial hills.
They struck the dewy leaves and woke
As many echoes slumbering there,
Till the whole world in carol broke,
And myriad song-notes thrilled the air.

THE DEAD LEAVES

SUCH a glory of red
And orange and gold
On hill-top and wold,
On the slope and the side,
From the foot to the head,
Of the mountains anigh,
As far and as wide
As the outlooking eye
Hath range to behold!
As if in the night
A billow of gold
Had flamingly rolled
The wilderness o'er,
And left in its trace
The magnificent light
Of the colors it bore,
To enrich the whole face
Of the earth with a store
Of measureless gold.

They are fallen and dead;
And the fulness and strength
Of their beauty have fled;
And, wasted at length
And withered and thin,
Their delicate frames
Already begin

To be painfully plain,
  Like a man when the flames
Of fever and pain
  Have hollowed his face,
And tightened the skin,
  And discovered the trace
  Of the bones of his face.

They lived and are dying.
I fancy them sighing
Over the past.
They sigh that at last,
After all the sweet phase
Of the long summer days,
The end is but death;
  And that life at the best
  Is a trial and test
And only a breath.
  And almost I see
  Them looking at me
With sorrowful faces,
  As day after day
  I bear them away
  And carefully lay
Them in burial places.

The bare, stricken boughs
Like mourners are left
Alone and bereft
Like statues of grief
Till the spring-time awake,
And the new life arouse
Each slumbering leaf.
So may it awake
And, like spring weather, make
The better soul rise,
Like a blossom awake
And bloom out of the eyes!

APPLE BUDS

BURST, ye apple-buds, red and white;
Breathe your fragrance into the dawn;
You will fade and fall ere Saturday night,
And the apple-boughs wonder where you are gone.

Sing, ye little birds, robin and wren;
Build your nests where the buds unfold;
Where will you be, and your nestful, when
The apple-boughs shrivel in winter cold?

Burst, fond heart, with the love you bestow;
Sing, happy heart, with the love you bring:
The apple-blooms fall, and the birds they go,
But love in the soul is eternal spring.

Lift your tender eyes, violets blue;
Cling, daisy, close to the meadow's soft breast;
For your petals will weep, tear-dropped with dew,
When your false lover, sunbeam, kisses the west.

Toss, ye idle winds, out on the leaves;
  Woo the gold in her sunny hair:
Death and October await their sheaves;
  Then wooing is weeping, and hope despair.

Burst, fond heart, with the love you bestow;
  Sing, happy heart, with the love you bring;
The leaves they fall, and her tresses lie low,
  But love over death forever is king.

SCHOOL DAYS

THE years go by, but never lose
The garnered wealth they bore,
The morning, kissing up the dews,
Is richer than before.

All rains that fell, all suns that shone,
In this June's roses stay:
The past is all the more our own
When clustered with to-day.

So beams our school-time here and now —
Eden of book and scroll —
The scholar's sunrise on the brow,
His stirring in the soul.

Again we part, but with us take
The bygone's draught divine,
For in our hearts afresh awake
The days of auld lang syne.

THE BEACH

DEAR friends in sweet remembered days
Spent long ago beside the sea, —
Once more, re-singing olden lays,
I ask you live them o'er with me.

So long, so short ago they seem,
Half fact, half fancy, of our youth,
At once kaleidoscoped in dream,
Yet clearly outlined in the truth.

Apart, they bind us still. We meet —
A word or nod — we pass — and, lo,
We stroll the sands, and at our feet
The great blue waters ebb and flow.

Fair skies are over sea and land;
The woods are cool, the fields are green;
The church, the light on either hand,
The fulness of repose between.

We swim at dawn, we raise the mast,
We lie on rocks, watch brig and barque
With great white sails glide slowly past,
Till the long day glooms into dark.

We gather at the evening meal;
The candle flickers on the wall;
Outside the warm night shadows steal;
The sea's deep murmurs rise and fall.

We sit about the open door,
We tell old tales, we sing old staves,
Till the cool stars deep slumber pour,
And dreams are in the lulling waves.

SUNSET

ON the West
Behold the gorgeous mountain crest!
Dusk hills and slopes, where cattle feast,
Enclose the East.

In the West
The crimson sun lies down to rest;
Yet from its bars one ray released
Streams to the East.

In the East
A cottage window-pane, increased
And to a flaming meteor dressed,
Out-glows the West.

Such are they
Who, dwelling far from light away,
Yet, catching there a ray divine,
Supremely shine.

LIMITATION

YOU walk amid a wilderness
Of hurrying forms and eager feet,
And now and then a hand you press
Or smile to nods from those you meet.

And yet you are not here, but far;
Your mind is not with forms and flesh;
Your soul is where the breezes are,
As free from weight, as free from mesh.

Your soul is where the breezes are;
Nay, faster rides than rolls the sea,
Outruns the wind, and striketh star,
And whirleth through immensity.

It is not with you on the earth;
It sees not those who pass you by;
But, proudly mindful of its birth,
It springeth, firelike, to the sky.

JESUS

I WOULD, dear Jesus, I could break
The hedge that creeds and hearsay make,
And, like thy first disciples, be
In person led and taught by thee.

I read thy words — so strong, so sweet;
I seek the footprints of thy feet;
But men so mystify the trace,
I long to see thee face to face.

Wouldst thou not let me, at thy side,
In thee, in thee so sure, confide?
Like John, upon thy breast recline
And feel thy heart make mine divine?

EVENING HYMN

THE evening winds begin to blow,
The shadows now grow long;
But still we linger, ere we go,
To sing our latest song.

Sing praise to God for sun and shade,
For summer's smiles and tears,
For all the blessings he has laid
Upon our teeming years.

Sing to each other truer love,
Affection's kindly glow,
The tenderness of God above
In human hearts below.

E'en as the dews now gently fall,
So, smiling on the day,
May God at eve upon us all
His benediction lay.

OUR MINISTER

THREESCORE and ten the years that round
Your full life to its perfect sphere,
With the white wreath of honor crowned,
The full corn ripened in the ear.

To God, to man thy brother, true,
Give not yet o'er the Christian strife;
Let us who love you, still pursue
The leading of your noble life.

God's peace is in your heart, well earned;
Sure treasure yours, laid up above:
The bread you cast hath all returned
In harvests of unmeasured love.

OUR SEXTON

GRAY in service and true as steel,
An honest man is our sexton old,
One of the sort in whom we feel
The antique stamp of the genuine gold.

Sure as the clock that stands in the tower
For forty long years he has rung the bell,
Struck the glad chimes of the wedding hour,
And tolled the sad notes of the funeral knell.

The homely church, old-fashioned and grim,
He loves it now as he loved his wife;
The organ and pulpit commune with him,
And the aisles and pews are his very life.

He loves its glooms, and its shadows win
His spirit back to the silent yore:
He has ushered so many out and in!
He remembers so many who come no more!

He would sooner part hand than fail his trust:
Forty long years and no day lost!
Winter and summer, come what must,
Duty has found him true to his post.

But God has now smitten him hard, and
torn
The wife of his youth from his side apart;
And he enters the church, this Sabbath
morn,
With aching lids and a broken heart.

Yet he rings the bell with a swing so bold
None knows he winces at every throb,
Nor do I till in mine his hand I hold,
And hear him, through lips that quiver,
sob —

" For many a week in pain she lay,
But grew easy at last at morning's peep:
I sat by her bedside night and day,
And closed her eyes when she fell asleep."

He catches the rope in dumb despair;
The bell rings out wide over the town,
And utters abroad on the morning air
The cry of anguish his heart keeps down.

ORDINATION HYMN

OH Father, let thy spirit wake,
Thy flame inspire his soul we pray
Who here the bread of life shall break,
And point to us thy truth and way.

Our shepherd who shall lead, be he,
To pastures green by waters still;
Thy staff to comfort us so we,
Through shadows walking, fear no ill.

A prophet sitting by the well,
Let him thy living water draw,
Interpreter to wisely tell
In spirit and in truth thy law.

Be with him that he lift thy rod,
With us that we stay up his hand,
So we with him and all with God
Move onward to the promised land.

THE PILGRIM

ALMIGHTY God, to thee we raise
Our hymns of thankfulness and praise,
Within the hollow of whose hand
The Pilgrim sought his promised land: —

Not the rich pastures of the vine
Flowing with honey, milk and wine,
But bleak shores swept by storm and sea,
His rude sole welcome — *thou art free!*

With corn he wooed the sullen soil,
But more with learning, home and toil,
Till now no vineyard of the sun
Blooms like the wilderness he won.

Inspired by faith, in purpose great,
He steadfast set his church and state;
Made them to stand 'gainst flood and shock,
For both he built upon the rock.

One taught — to God and conscience true—
More light to seek, the right to do:
The other broadened to the span
Of man's equality with man.

Children of fathers such as he,
Be ours his true nobility!
Lord of the realm, he served its growth;
To serve — be still the freeman's oath!

CENTENNIAL HYMN, 1876

PRAISE be to God, whose cloud by day
And fire by night have led the way
Till sure and staunch the nation clears
Its cycle of a hundred years.

A hundred years of growth and grace;
And lo, a sparse dependent race,
Within the Atlantic border pent,
Hath broadened o'er a continent.

From grander heights attained, we bless
The grand beginnings, none the less:
Unhushed by time, their utterance rings
And stirs us still to grander things.

Today before us rise sublime
The giants of that early time
As fearing God, not kings, they dare
A freeman's commonwealth declare.

THE FLAG

LIKE the grass swayed to and fro
Over which the breezes go,
Like long tresses tumbling down
Rippling up from foot to crown,
Like billows rolling on the ocean,
Our glorious flag floats full and free.
Its matchless hues now interfuse,
And now swell wide against the tide
That bloats its straining canopy;
Like smoke it wreathes in rills, and breathes
Its fainting blaze into the haze,
And slowly palpitates until
It lures the eye as if it still
Went rippling further through the sky —
The very poetry of motion!

Emblem thou of liberty,
Banner of the brave and free,
Stars and stripes! Red, white and blue!
Old Thirteen, new Thirty-two!
Afloat aloft on land or ocean,
There's not an eye with tears untraced
That sees thy glory in the sky;

There's no true heart that would not die
To keep thy scroll, no stripe erased,
No star obscured, still floating high;
No wanderer, far from home, beholds
Without a thrill thy sheltering folds;
There's no man, worthy to be free,
Who doth not look and cling to thee
With all a patriot's devotion.

THE SOLDIER'S HOME

1861–1881

A MOTHER'S kiss — a sweetheart's sigh, —
A cottage door, red-arched with rose;
A fair young soldier cries Good-bye,
And to the front of battle goes.

Wounded at Malvern Hill he fell;
In Libby wasted, heart and limb;
Kinder hath death been than the shell
At Gettysburg that shattered him.

Yet dared he all, and all he bore.
What need feared he, come late or soon?
Had not his country o'er and o'er
Pledged him her laurel and her boon?

Nation and state keep well their trust;
Yet lest one roofless veteran roam,
Mother, sweetheart and roses — dust,
Add we our gift — a soldier's home.

THE CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON

THIS is the terrace of the Capitol.
The July sun sets slowly in the west
And with its glow suffuses there the sky
'Gainst which the monument springs high and white.
The city roofs are clustered in the green
Luxuriant foliage of the summer leaves;
While near at hand against these marble walls
Sweep up soft lawns like emerald set with pearl.
The hum of the long summer day is past,
And silence, yet more eloquent, has come —
The silence of the hushing of the earth,
As if in his great arm God gave it rest.
Sweetness and light are laid upon its face, —
The sweetness of the light of dying day,
So exquisite that though it seems unwaned
It quenches not the young moon's crescent horn
Which shines serene and clear half up the sky.

Sweetness and light it is, but, more than
these,
It is the embodied deity of peace, —
The peace of nature's love enfolding down,
The peace that puts to rest the heart of
man,
The peace of land and people blessed by
God.

Southward, between the arches of the trees,
The gleam of the Potomac answers back,
As it lies lingering at the bathing feet
Of the Virginia hills whose tops are crowned
With verdure and with rich dark cooling
woods.
Across from shore to shore the long bridge
runs
And with its slender stretch yet firmly links
Forever to each other North and South.
What memories throng it now, dense as the
hosts
That made it echo once the tread of war!
Lo, there the field where freedom's mighty
heart
Throbbed in the breasts of chivalry and
youth,
And sped to battle which it bled to win
For those it fought for and for those it
fought.

There lie the ashes of the patriot dead
Who people now the spaces of the sky
And thence look down upon a land redeemed,
On shackled bondmen disenthralled and free,
A broken union whole — united states,
Aye, and united hearts, — one people all.

A KINDLY CRITIC

OH, my baby with soft white cheeks!
Oh, my baby with wise blue eyes!
Nestle your head down under my chin,
Hear papa sing of the sea and the skies.

Nobody else thinks he can sing:
You are so little you tolerate him,
And when you laugh and look up in his face,
His heart is happiness full to the brim.

Homely red flannel night-gown on,
You have gone to sleep while he holds you fast;
Dreamless you slumber, but wide wakes he
And walks with the shadowy dreams of the past.

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